

pursued his law studies, spending his winters in Williamsburg¹ and his summers on his estate of Shadwell. Once he left his books to take a journey and get a glimpse of the outside world. In a one-horse chaise he traveled north as far as New York, passing through Annapolis and Philadelphia. At the latter place, in obedience to his penchant for science, he had himself inoculated for small-pox. In New York he made the acquaintance of Elbridge Gerry, a young man whose ideals and aims were similar to his own. The young men conceived a deep regard for each other and for many years were political allies, Gerry being the most powerful supporter of Jefferson in New England. Soon after his return from this trip, Jefferson was admitted to the practice of the law at the bar of the General Court of Virginia. He was now in his twenty-fourth year.

JEFFERSON AS A FARMER AND LAWYER.

The civilization of Virginia in the eighteenth century was uniformly and universally rural. When Jefferson at the age of seventeen entered Williamsburg, he had never in his life seen, a collection of houses numbering as many as a dozen. There were no* large towns, no manufacturing industries, no inter-county or inter-colonial commerce. Farming was the one occupation of the people, and tobacco' the one product of the farm,. Tobacco, as has been pithily said, was king. The farms i—large tracts of land consisting sometimes of thousands of acres—were tilled by slaves. Slavery and tobacco formed the basis of society. Jefferson was a farmer, owned slaves, and impoverished his land by the cultivation of tobacco*. He esteemed farmers as God's chosen people and he never ceased to praise agriculture* as the only moral and ennobling vocation. As the oldest son of Peter Jefferson he inherited, besides a number of slaves, the homestead, Shadwell—an estate of nineteen hundred acres of the finest land in Virginia, situated on the Rivanna, a tributary of the James. When the young man took possession, of his lands the Rivanna was unnavigable for